

OF THE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OF THE

TOWN OF CANTON,

For the Year 1860.

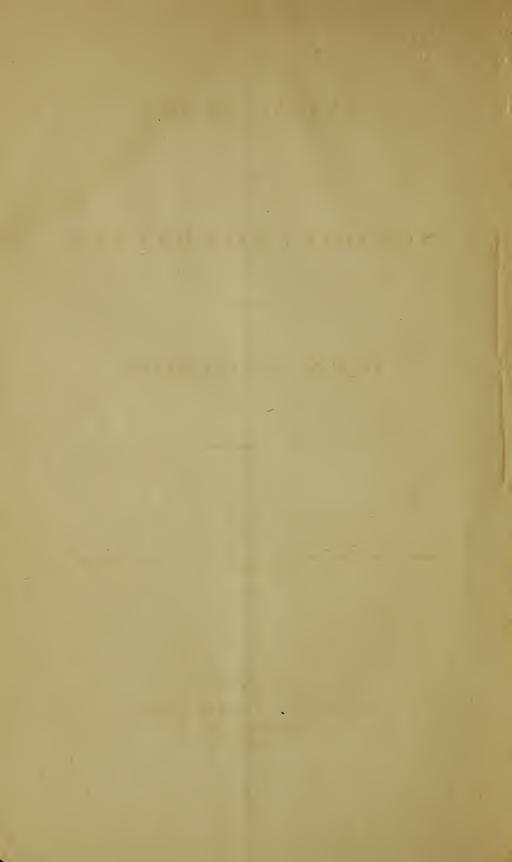
PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN ACT OF THE LEGISLA TURE OF 1850.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BENSE,

8 CONGRESS SQUARE.

1860.



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

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OF THE

TOWN OF CANTON,

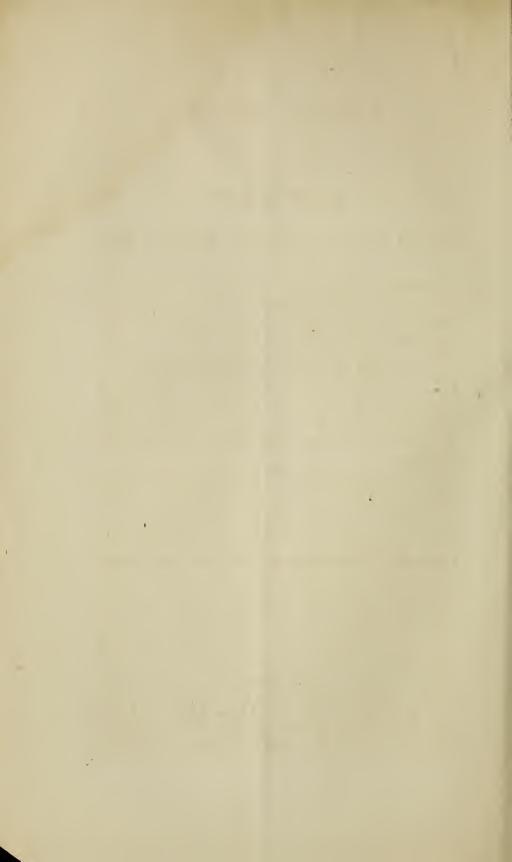
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REPORT.

In compliance with the statute requiring from them, each year, a statement to the inhabitants of the town of the condition of the schools, together with such suggestions for their improvement as may have commended themselves to their judgment, the School Committee herein submit their Annual Report. A brief history of the labors of the Committee as a whole, during the past year, will first be given. Such a course seems the more proper, from the fact that new and peculiar duties have devolved upon them during that time, requiring the exercise of no little care and discernment for their proper fulfilment.

Soon after the April Town Meeting, the Committee was organized by the election of E. Capen, Chairman; S. B. Noyes, Secretary; and J. Mason Everett, Superintendent of Public Schools. One of the first questions that claimed the attention of the Board after their organization, was that of the apportionment of the school money. This important question, the introduction of which in times past has usually been the signal for a hostile array of the different sections of the town against each other, and the solution of which has rarely been satisfactory to all concerned, was happily disposed of by simply fixing the price per week for teachers, and establishing an equal length of schools throughout the town. This the Committee were enabled to do by virtue of a vote of the town last Spring, authorizing them to select and contract with teachers.

By referring to the last Annual Report, it will be seen that this course was urgently advocated there. As its propriety, however, seems to be questioned by a portion of our citizens, the Committee have thought proper to discuss the question somewhat more at length in this Report; reviewing their course in this particular branch of their duties during the past year, and summing up their convictions as to its influence upon the prosperity of our schools, based, not now, as then, upon theory and the experience of other towns, but upon actual experience in this town.

Reiterating all that was then said as to the absurdity of contracting with any employee, least of all a teacher of our children, previous to ascertaining his qualifications, —the difficulty of refusing a certificate to a teacher employed by a prudential committee, except upon the most undoubted evidence of incapacity, the advantage it was expected would be derived from competition among applicants, under the system proposed, - your Committee ask your candid attention to a few other considerations upon this subject. It has been urged by some of the opponents of the plan adopted last year, - and which, with some modification, is recommended for your adoption this year.that it takes away the independence of the districts, deprives them of the power to manage their schools in their own way. is undemocratic. These objections are doubtless honestly entertained by many who have the interests of the schools at heart; and if, upon careful examination, they be found valid. not a moment should be lost in restoring to the districts the rights of which they have been deprived. But if it shall be found that, instead of compromising the independence of the districts, a more perfect control over the selection of their teachers, greater facilities for securing good teachers, and consequently better schools, have been secured, -then it is hoped that the better judgment of every citizen will impel him to a cheerful acquiescence in the plan proposed.

Let us consider these objections. Under the old system, at the annual district meeting, some person was elected prudential committee, whose duty it should be to take care of the property of the district, provide fuel, &c., and contract with some one to teach the school; subject to the ratification, upon certain conditions, of the school committee. Under the system

proposed, at the same annual meeting a prudential committee would be elected as before, who would have the same powers and duties, with the single exception of contracting with teachers; which duty would devolve upon the member of the school committee from that district, the candidate for which office might then and there be nominated and presented to the town for election at April meeting. In both instances the person selected to contract with teachers would be the choice of the district, and the one system thus far considered, would appear to be as democratic as the other. Let us however look further. We will suppose an instance by no means rare in the history of the old system. A certain individual is elected prudential committee at a thinly attended meeting in a certain The town has authorized prudential committees to district. select and contract with teachers. A certain teacher has been employed and given abundant satisfaction, and the desire of the district is, of course, to retain him in their service. It turns out, however, that the desire of the prudential committee is to employ some other person. He may be honest in his convictions that the person desired by the district is not the right teacher; he may have some personal spite against him, or he may have some relative or friend whom he would like to favor by giving him the appointment. What remedy have the people of the district in such a case? The prudential committee has been elected for the year, and there is no appeal from his decision. The school committee might indeed refuse a certificate, and if they had abundant reason to believe the obnoxious candidate incompetent, they doubtless would do so, but otherwise would scarcely interfere. But even though the school committe should interfere in the manner suggested, would it necessarily or even probably follow, that the wishes of the district would be consulted in the second selection more than in the first? And if such should be the effect of their interference, would it not show the fallacy of the position that the independence of the districts is lost or even jeopardized by putting this whole matter in the control of the school committee?

But, on the other hand, let us now suppose this same obstinate individual to have been nominated by the district, and elected by the town as a member of the school committee to represent that district, and that the town have authorized the school committee to select and contract with teachers. Influenced by the same motives, whether honest or otherwise, he opposes the election of a teacher who is acceptable to all the district but himself; but he no longer wields the absolute authority of the prudential committee in this matter. He is now only one member of a committee of nine, and no reasonable person can for a moment doubt but that upon a proper presentation of the case by the people of the district, to the school committee, the teacher of their choice would be selected. far then from being undemocratic, the system proposed would seem to be less open to such objection than the old one, - the authority of the prudential committee being absolute and without appeal, and the authority of each member of the school committee being subject to the ratification of the board, - and the power to contract with teachers would seem to be safer in the hands of the same persons as members of the school committee, than as prudential committees, wholly independent of each other as they would be.

Your Committee desire to be distinctly understood as casting no reflections upon the motives or the capacity of the individuals who constitute the several prudential committees at the present time. The districts appear to have been peculiarly fortunate in their selection this year; and could the services of such gentlemen be always secured, there would be less reason to oppose the old system; though even then there would be some weighty considerations in favor of the new. The office of prudential committee is regarded somewhat in the light of a burthen, and it is rare that a person, however well qualified to contract with teachers, can be induced to serve more than one year; and though his successor be equally qualified in other respects, he lacks the experience of his predecessor. On the other hand, each member of the school committee is elected for the term of three years, and can gen-

erally be induced to serve a second term. It is, however, a notorious fact, that in the process of rotating the office of prudential committee among the members of the district, in turn, the important and responsible duty of selecting teachers is committed to persons totally unqualified to perform that duty. Your Committee cannot think that system the best, that admits, not merely the possibility, but the probability of so deplorable a contingency.

Having discussed this question thus far theoretically, it is with no little satisfaction that the Committee now advert to the experience of the past year, during which the new system has been in practice; and point to the general excellence of the schools in town, as evidence of the beneficial working of the system. Soon after the organization of the Committee, a meeting was held for the purpose of examining candidates for teachers. One or more candidates were presented by each member, for the school in his district. The terms of the contract having been stated to all the applicants, the Committee proceeded to a critical examination of all. Subsequent to this examination the Committee proceeded to the election of teachers for the several schools, the member from each district exercising the right of nominating the candidate. A precisely similar course was pursued in contracting with the teachers for the Winter term; and in every instance, other things being equal, preference was give to those who intended making teaching their profession.

Whether it be the result of the foregoing plan of securing teachers, or whether it be counted one of those remarkable coincidences that sometimes occur,—it is a none the less gratifying fact, that the schools during the past year, have with very few exceptions maintained a high standard of excellence. There is perhaps no truer test of the prosperity of a school than its average attendance; and to elevate the standard in this particular has been the constant aim of your Committee. That the result of their labors has been highly satisfactory, may be seen from the fact that while the mean average attendance for 1857 and 1858 was seventy-six per cent., that of the

past year has been eighty-four per cent. This result is in a large degree owing to the zealous co-operation of the teachers, almost without exception, and might have been greatly improved by a corresponding zeal on the part of those most vitally interested, — the parents.

The following startling facts published in the last Annual Report of the Board of Education, as the result of inquiries addressed to the officers of the punitive and reformatory institutions of the State, are pregnant with admonition:—

Whole number of inmates,	1,870
Number who were constant attendants upon, and received a system-	
atic training in, any school for the term of three months each	
year, for the period of seven years, · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	624
Number who received such training for the period of five years,	328
Number who received such training for the period of three years,	356
Number who received such training for the period of one year,	256
Number who never regularly attended schools of any sort,	291
Number addicted to occasional or frequent truancy,	904

With such facts as these before us, it is certainly gratifying to note the awakening interest in the matter of attendance in our own schools.

As an incentive to punctuality and constancy, the plan was adopted, last year, of mentioning the names of such pupils as had commended themselves to the favorable notice of the Committee in this respect. The following are the names of those pupils who have not been absent or tardy in a single instance, during a whole term of school:—

DISTRICT No. 1. - Miss Emma J. Blackman.

DISTRICT No. 2. — Misses Mary F. Peterson, Esther J. Davenport, and Louisa C. Hunt; Masters Horace A. Daven port and Wm. H. Peterson.

DISTRICT No. 3. — Misses Cora H. Howes, Mary E. French, Lucy A. Hall, Marion E. Perry, Marietta Wright, Eudora Blackman, Minetta A. Howes, Louisa Banks, Annie E. Tucker, Susan W. Howard, and Harriet M. Wales; Masters John D. Billings, George E. Everett, Benjamin W. Jewell, Charles W. Endicott, Edward D. Endicott, and James Galligan.

DISTRICT No. 4. — Misses Eliza F. Blair, Harriet E. Jones, Mary H. Tucker, and Ella A. Tucker; Master James H. May. DISTRICT No. 5. — Miss Mary E. Johnson and Master Geo. W. Chesley.

DISTRICT No. 6. — Misses Caroline A. White, Hermeone P. White, Lizzie V. White, Ellen Martin, Fannie L. Pitts, and Master Elisha White.

DISTRICT No. 7. — Misses Caroline A. Ceiley, Mary E. Drake, Georgia Shepard, Ella M. Makepeace, and Susan M. Macomber; Masters Benj. B. Shepard, James Makepeace, Benj. Leavitt, Edgar B. Makepeace, John M. Macomber, John Salmon, Thomas Salmon, Freddie P. Drake, and Clarence M. Lord.

Of these, Misses Eliza F. Blair, Mary H. Tucker, Caroline A. White, Lizzie V. White, Mary E. Drake, and Georgia Shepard, and Masters Geo. E. Everett, John M. Macomber, and Benjamin Leavitt, have neither been absent or tardy during the entire year!

The appropriation for the support of schools the past year was \$3200. This sum, together with the amount received from the State School-Fund, has been sufficient to maintain the schools, at the prices adopted by the Committee, for the period of nine months throughout the town. The cost per week for teaching, with six male teachers in the Winter schools, has been \$6.35. The cost per week in 1858-9 was \$6.52, while the cost per week in 1857-8 was \$7.44, four male teachers being employed in the Winter schools of each of the two last named years. At the rates paid for teachers in 1857-8, the last year's appropriation would have maintained the schools a little less than thirty-one weeks, instead of nine months. This difference in favor of the past year is mainly owing to the fact that, under the plan adopted, the supply of teachers who have presented themselves for examination, has far exceeded the demand, and good teachers have not been wanting at the prices deemed reasonable by the Committee.

Some account of the condition and progress of the several schools will now be given:—

DISTRICT NO. 1. - CANTON CENTRE.

Summer Term. — Teacher, Miss Mary E. Tucker. Whole number of pupils, 38; average attendance, 33. Winter Term. — Teacher, Mr. A. Sumner Deane. Whole number of pupils, 40; average attendance, 31.

The usefulness of this school was seriously impaired during the Summer term, by the want of suitable accommodations. Only a few weeks before the commencement of the term, the District decided to remodel their school-house; and the Town Hall being the only available place, the school assembled here until the school-house was ready for their reception, which did not occur until the latter part of September. Discouraging, however, as these circumstances must have been to both teacher and pupils, the progress of the school was quite commendable.

The Winter term, however, commenced under auspices as favorable as those of the Summer term had been otherwise. A new and commodious school-house was ready to receive the school, and the selection of Mr. Deane as its instructor proved to be a most fortunate one. Bringing to his task a determination to succeed, he labored zealously and with excellent results throughout the term; and though he found in the school at its commencement some of the most advanced scholars in the town, he left them at its close with still higher attainments, having placed the school in a position most gratifying to all concerned. Some of the higher mathematics were taught, and practically applied in surveying localities in the neighborhood.

DISTRICT NO. 2. - PUNKAPOG.

Summer Term. — Teachers, Miss N. A. Wilson and Miss Mary L. Locke. Whole number of pupils, 31; average attendance, 28. Winter Term. — Teacher, Mr. Charles E. E.

Mosher. Whole number of pupils, 32; average attendance, 29.

The fitness of the first choice of the Committee for teacher of the Summer school was just beginning to be exhibited in the marked progress of the school, when she was compelled by sickness to give up teaching, and was succeeded by Miss Locke who taught during the remainder of the term. Owing to some delay in procuring a teacher in midsummer, the Summer term was shortened nearly two weeks, and the Winter term prolonged in compensation.

The Winter school under the tuition of Mr. Mosher, a professional teacher of large experience, was characterized by thoroughness and system in every department. He has left an impression upon the school which we trust will be lasting.

DISTRICT NO. 3. - South Canton.

GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT.

Summer Term. — Teacher, Mr. J. C. Meade. Whole number of pupils, 29; average attendance, 23. Winter Term. — Teacher, Mr. L. B. Pillsbury. Whole number of pupils, 43; average attendance, 40.

The Summer term was taught with Mr. Meade's accustomed ability and the school presented some excellent features. Reading and Penmanship, in the teaching of which two branches Mr. Meade excels, were well and thoroughly taught.

On the resignation of Mr. Meade at the close of the Summer term, the choice of the Committee fell upon Mr. L. B. Pillsbury, out of a number of applicants. The excellence of this choice needs no better confirmation, than has been furnished by the marked progress of the school under his instruction. Were we to designate any particular study in illustration of this fact, it would be that of English Grammar.

INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT.

Summer Term. — Teacher, Mrs. Martha C. Meade. Whole number of pupils, 43; average attendance, 36. Winter Term. — Whole number of pupils, 42; average attendance, 38.

Were the Committee to reiterate what was said of this school in their last report, it would be no small praise. The experience of another year, however, during which the school has been under the charge of the same teacher, has not only confirmed them in the opinion then expressed, but has heightened, if possible, their estimation of her abilities as a teacher. There was always an air of tranquillity about her school which made it a pleasant one to visit, and attested in unmistakable terms her ability as a disciplinarian. It is with deep regret that we contemplate her retirement from a vocation to which she has shown herself so eminently adapted.

FIRST PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

Summer Term. — Teacher, Miss Eveleen L. Knaggs. Whole number of pupils, 48; average attendance, 40. Winter Term. — Whole number of pupils, 52; average attendance, 46.

At each successive visit to this school during the past year, the Superintendent was greeted with fresh evidences of improvement. The teacher has labored faithfully, and the result of her labors has been highly satisfactory. The classes in Geography were particularly prompt and correct in their answers.

SECOND PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

Summer Term. — Teacher, Miss Charlotte E. Bense. Whole number of pupils, 57; average attendance, 49. Winter Term. — Whole number of pupils, 52; average attendance, 44.

In this school, as in all the primary schools in this district, there has been no change of teachers during the year. Under the tuition of Miss Bense who gave such high promise during her first year's experience as a teacher, the progress of the school has been most commendable. The importance of securing good teachers for our primary schools cannot be too highly estimated. It is their privilege to convey to the mind of the child its earliest and most lasting impressions, and we think it would not be difficult for even a casual observer to designate those pupils of the higher departments who have been thoroughly trained in the primary schools.

THIRD PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

Summer Term. — Teacher, Miss L. Pauline Leach. Whole number of pupils, 87; average attendance, 62. Winter Term. — Whole number of pupils, 85; average attendance, 52.

The Committee have no hesitation in awarding to Miss Leach the highest praise for the wonderful control she has managed to obtain over the discordant elements of a school, composed to so large an extent, of children under five years of age, who have never been accustomed to the restraints of the school-room. She has just the faculties required for her position. The attendance, which must necessarily be irregular in such a school, has not been unusually so the past year.

DISTRICT NO. 4. - YORK.

Summer Term. — Teacher, Miss Mary E. Churchill. Whole number of pupils, 22; average attendance, 16. Winter Term. — Teacher, Mr. C. M. Sawtell. Whole number of pupils, 29; average attendance, 23.

The progress of this school during the past year, should be satisfactory to the most exacting. The Committee would particularly commend the appearance of the classes in Arithmetic, at the closing examination of the Summer term.

Of the Winter school, it is enough to say that the high

expectations of the Committee from the well known antecedents of Mr. Sawtell were fully realized. The copy-books unmistakably show that greater attention has been paid to Penmanship in this school than in any other school in town.

DISTRICT NO. 5. - PLEASANT STREET.

Summer Term. — Teacher, Miss A. A. Morse. Whole number of pupils, 48; average attendance, 36. Winter Term. — Teacher, Mr. Walter H. Seaver. Whole number of pupils, 51; average attendance, 41.

It is difficult, where the schools have been so generally successful, to award to each such meed of commendation as shall be exactly just, without a constant repetition of nearly the same terms. The Summer school was taught by a young lady residing in the district, and presented some excellent features.

The Winter school was taught by Mr. Seaver, with rare ability and most gratifying results. The pupils were taught to think for themselves, as well as to commit the thoughts of others, and your Committee have seldom felt at liberty to express so unreservedly their approbation, as when referring to the manner in which this school has been conducted. Algebra and the elements of Astronomy were both successfully taught.

DISTRICT NO. 6. - WEST CANTON.

Summer Term. — Teachers, Miss Martha M. Davis, and Miss Eliza C. Fisher. Whole number of pupils, 68; average attendance, 62. Winter Term. — Teachers, Mr. J. C. Meade, and Miss Eliza C. Fisher. Whole number of pupils, 61; average attendance, 55.

On account of the large number of pupils belonging to this school, it was deemed necessary at the commencement of the Summer term, to place an assistant in the school, and Miss Fisher was accordingly appointed to take charge of the primary classes, a position which she has filled with marked ability throughout the year. At the close of the Summer term, it having become apparent to the Committee that the interests of the school demanded a male teacher, Mr. Meade was elected to that position. This appointment was felt to be equivalent to a guaranty of the prosperity of the Winter school, and the Committee are pleased to be able to say that they have not been disappointed in its results. Such general excellence as has been manifested by the classes of both Principal and Assistant, is rarely witnessed.

DISTRICT NO. 7. - GRIDLEY SCHOOL.

GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT.

Summer Term. — Teacher, Miss Myra Beaumont. Whole number of pupils, 25; average attendance, 23. Winter Term — Whole number of pupils, 30; average attendance, 29 13-16.

Miss Beaumont, favorably known from her connection with the school in District No. 2, has taught this school during the entire year; and through her persistent efforts in the right direction, it has fully maintained its high position. The appearance of the school at the closing examination, deserves the highest commendation.

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT.

Summer Term. — Teacher, Miss Louise M. Clarke. Whole number of pupils 39; average attendance, 34. Winter Term — Whole number of pupils, 48; average attendance, 41.

The efficient services of Miss Clarke, who taught the school during the Winter term of last year, have been retained throughout the year. She has been faithful in the performance of her duties, and in her method of teaching has given evidence of high qualifications as a teacher.

In the above synopsis, nothing more than a mere outline of the condition of the schools has been attempted. Enough has been said, however, to convey a pretty correct idea of what that condition has been, and indicate the generally favorable impressions received by the Committee.

Since the presentation of our last report, the friends of popular education have been called to mourn, in the death of Horace Mann, the loss of one of its truest friends and noblest benefactors. In every enlightened community, the death of such a man is regarded as a public calamity, and certainly those to whose highest interest the best years of his life were devoted, should not be slow to do honor to his memory. Soon after the reception in this town of the news of his death, a meeting of his friends was called to consider what steps should be taken towards the erection of a suitable monument to his memory. Appropriate and interesting remarks were made by prominent citizens, and the following resolution, presented by S. B. Noyes, Esq., was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That as citizens of Massachusetts, we cherish and revere the memory of Horace Mann, the jurist, the orator, the Christian Philosopher, the incorruptible Statesman; who consecrated his great learning and intellect to the cause of humanity and popular education, and whose life, to use his own words, was "anchored to his convictions of duty."

For the Committee,

J. MASON EVERETT,

Superintendent of Public Schools

School Committee.

GEORGE F. SUMNER, NATHAN TUCKER, EZEKIEL CAPEN, JESSE FENNO, JOHN FANNING, JOSEPH W. WATTLES, JAMES S. SHEPARD, S. B. NOYES,

J. MASON EVERETT.

TABLE.

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· See page 11. Amount of Town appropriation, \$ 32.00. received from State, 128.34.

LIST OF TEXT-BOOKS

ORDERED BY THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE TO BE USED IN THE SCHOOLS OF CANTON.

READERS. — New Testament, Russell's American School Reader, Swan's Readers, and Russell's Primer.

Spellers. — Swan's Spellers, and Worcester's Dictionary.

English Grammar. — Weld's, Tower's First Lessons, and Weld's Parsing Book.

ARITHMETIC. — Emerson's First Part, Colburn's Mental, and Greenleaf's Introduction, and National.

Geography. — Cornell's Series, and Warren's Physical Geography.

PENMANSHIP. - Payson, Dunton, & Scribner's.

HISTORY. — Parley's, Goodrich's United States, and Worcester's Generál History.

MATHEMATICS. - Sherwin's Algebra and Davies' Geometry.

Physiology. — Cutter's Physiology and Hygiene.

BOOK-KEEPING. — Hanaford and Payson's.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

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